

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES  
DIVISION OF MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY  
BUREAU OF FISCAL SERVICES

ACCOUNTING POLICY

TOPIC: Section 10--Special Expense 2.1	EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/30/93
TITLE: Meals Provided at Conference, Training or Meeting Sites	REVISION DATE: 10/18/02
AUTHORIZED BY: Cheryl Thompson, Deputy Director	PAGE 1 OF 3

**BACKGROUND**

The Department sponsors a substantial number of conferences, training sessions or meetings where on site meals must be arranged in advance. Meals may be provided when included with the registration fee as a component of the conference schedule. In many cases, the facility waives the fee for meeting rooms when the meals are provided.

The Department's policy requires that meal expenses, if allowed, meet the test of "actual, reasonable, and necessary expense incurred in the discharge of official duties." One of the steps conducted by Accounts Payable/Preaudit is to verify that meal maximums per person are not exceeded. DHFS organizations should not knowingly contract for meals exceeding state meal maximums. Please note that the Meal Maximums include the gratuity.

**Special Note:** The maximum allowable gratuity for individually purchased meals is 15%. The Department no longer requires vendors to accept 15% as the maximum gratuity or service charge on group-purchased meals at conferences and/or meetings. For group-purchased meals, the amount of gratuity or service charge is to be based upon what is negotiated between the vendor and the Department. This amount will be considered the industry normal amount. The meal maximums which include the gratuity still apply.

**POLICY**

Accounts Payable/Preaudit require organizations to submit a list of people actually attending the function along with the original invoice for any meals provided. This information is used to determine that allowable meal maximums are not exceeded.

As an alternative to the above list, Accounts Payable/Preaudit will allow organizations to substitute a list of paid registrants for a list of actual attendees. When using the list of paid registrants, the organization needs to state that there are no refunds or credits to registrants after the final arrangements have been made with the vendor.

When meal maximums are exceeded, the organization is required to submit justification and approval by Division Administrator/Office Director. This

may be delegated further but not further than Bureau Directors. If the Division Administrator/Office Director further delegates this approval authority, a signed statement identifying the designee must be forwarded to Harlan Olson in the Accounts Payable/Preaudit Section - Bureau of Fiscal Services.

Accounts Payable/Preaudit will not allow reimbursement for these meals if the organization does not provide a list of attendees or registrants.

**PROCEDURE**

Meal expenses incurred as a part of a conference, meeting or training session may be allowed provided that the following conditions are met.

1. An appropriate detailed original invoice must be submitted. The detailed invoice should indicate what was served as well as the number of people served. No alcoholic beverages may be included.
2. The meal expense (inclusive of gratuity) does not exceed the meal maximums. See **Section 12-Travel 1.0** (Travel and Lodging Provisions) for meal maximums.

**Special Note:** The maximum allowable gratuity for individually purchased meals is 15%. The Department no longer requires vendors to accept 15% as the maximum gratuity or service charge on group-purchased meals at conferences and/or meetings. For group-purchased meals, the amount of gratuity or service charge is to be based upon what is negotiated between the vendor and the Department. This amount will be considered the industry normal amount. The meal maximums which include the gratuity still apply.

3. One of the following two lists are required to be submitted:
  - a. A list of people actually attending the function.
  - b. A list of paid registrants. This option requires that the organization provide a statement that there are no refunds or credits to registrants after the final arrangements have been made with the vendor.
4. The Department must make payment directly to the vendor. The Department currently requires a purchase requisition if the cost is from \$100.00 to \$5,000.00. If the cost exceeds \$5,000.00, a purchase order is required.

**Special Note:** The P-Card may be used as an alternative to pay for group-purchased meals in lieu of using a Purchase Requisition. This also includes those situations where the payment is below the Purchase Requisition requirements.

5. Under 3. a. Above, the list of people attending should include their headquarter city. If headquarter city meals are involved, reimbursement will be authorized only when absolutely necessary pursuant to **Section**

**12-Travel 1.6** (Headquarters City Meals and Meeting Locations-Delegation of Authority). Please note: The headquarter city approval requirement is waived when there is a registration fee.

**REFERENCES**

DHFS APP **Section 12-Travel 1.0** (Travel and Lodging Provisions)

DHFS APP **Section 12-Travel 1.6** (Headquarters City Meals and Meeting Locations-Delegation of Authority)

**CONTACTS**

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